

Child Care Licensing Overview

Office of Child Care Regulation
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Child Care Licensing

Florida's first attempt to regulate child care occurred in 1941 when the Legislature mandated that those caring for children in counties with a population greater than 267,000 be licensed by the State Welfare Board and inspected by the State Board of Health. In 1974, Florida united with other states to implement a statewide licensure law for child care and to develop minimum standards with the assistance of a state child care advisory board. In 1975, regulations were established for child care licensure. Over the years, the regulatory law has had periodic amendments and continues to empower the mission of the child care regulation program. Ongoing licensing inspections and technical assistance are provided by trained staff to ensure compliance with health and safety standards and protect children in care.

Local Licensing Counties

Five counties in Florida have elected to designate a local licensing agency to regulate licensing of child care arrangements based on provisions in s. 402.306, F.S. These counties are:

- Broward
- Hillsborough
- Palm Beach
- Pinellas
- Sarasota

Today, the Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening of the Department of Children and Families is statutorily responsible for the statewide administration of the child care licensing program in 62 of the 67 counties in Florida.

Legislative Intent



s. 402.301-319, Florida Statutes

- ◆ Protect the health and safety of all children in licensed facilities and homes.
- ◆ Provide training to child care providers to enhance the safety and quality of care
- ◆ Promote quality child care for all children in care.
- ◆ Involves communities and organizations in the development of child care standards to meet the needs of the children and providers through mutual goals and initiatives.

Child Care Arrangements



The Department currently regulates the following child care settings:

- ◆ Licensed Child Care Facilities
 - ◆ Licensed Family Day Care Homes
 - ◆ Licensed Large Family Child Care Homes
- ◆ Licensed Specialized Child Care Facilities for the Care of Mildly Ill Children
- ◆ Registered Family Day Care Homes*

*As registered family day care homes are not licensed, they are not subject to onsite inspections.

Child Care Website

Florida's Child Care Website is a comprehensive web based resource for parents interested in locating quality child care arrangements.

Internet availability and the touch of a computer keyboard give parents access to child care provider demographic data, maps displaying the location of child care resources within each community, as well as the actual compliance/noncompliance inspection report history of licensed child care facilities and homes statewide.

Specific information for locating licensed facilities and homes may be found on the child care website, under "Provider Search."

Child Care Training

Child Care training is an important component and statutory requirement of the child care licensing program. Educating child care personnel is an essential determinant of the quality of service that children receive while in care. The following is a brief summary of some of the training that is required of a child care personnel:

Child Care Facility Personnel: Must complete 40 hours of department approved training and subsequently pass a competency exam. Additionally, a minimum of 10 hours in-service training is required annually. (Note: This requirement does not apply to volunteers who work less than 10 hours per week and are under constant and direct supervision.)

Family Day Care Home Operators: Must complete 30 hours of department approved training and subsequently pass a competency exam. Additionally, a minimum of 10 hours in-service training is required annually.

Large Family Child Care Operators: Must complete 40 hours of department approved training and subsequently pass a competency exam. Additionally, a minimum of 10 hours in service training is required annually.

Further details about training requirements may be found on the child care website: www.myflorida.com/childcare

Child Care Health & Safety Standards

Child Care health & safety standards for child care facilities and homes include, but are not limited to, the following areas:

- ◆ Personnel Requirements
- ◆ Minimum Staff Credentials
- ◆ Capacity Requirements
- ◆ Staff-to-Child Ratios
- ◆ Physical Environment
- ◆ Sanitation and Safety
- ◆ Training
- ◆ Health-Related Requirements
- ◆ Food and Nutrition
- ◆ Record Keeping
- ◆ Transportation Safety

For more specific details on the above standards, please visit the child care website, under "Laws and Requirements."



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